

**STRATEGY  
RESEARCH  
PROJECT**

The views expressed in this paper are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Department of Defense or any of its agencies. This document may not be released for open publication until it has been cleared by the appropriate military service or government agency.

**TOWARDS A EUROPEAN STRATEGIC DEFENCE CAPABILITY**

**BY**

**COLONEL TFL WEEKS  
United Kingdom**

**DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT A:**  
**Approved for Public Release.**  
**Distribution is Unlimited.**

**USAWC CLASS OF 2000**



**U.S. ARMY WAR COLLEGE, CARLISLE BARRACKS, PA 17013-5050**

USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

**TOWARDS A EUROPEAN STRATEGIC DEFENCE CAPABILITY**

by

Colonel TFL Weeks OBE  
United Kingdom International Fellow

Colonel Frank R Hancock  
Project Advisor

The views expressed in this academic research paper are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of the U.S. Government, the Department of Defense, or any of its agencies.

U.S. Army War College  
CARLISLE BARRACKS, PENNSYLVANIA 17013

DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT A:  
Approved for public release.  
Distribution is unlimited.



## **ABSTRACT**

**AUTHOR:** Colonel TFL Weeks OBE

**TITLE:** TOWARDS A EUROPEAN STRATEGIC DEFENCE CAPABILITY

**FORMAT:** Strategy Research Project

**DATE:** 01 MARCH 2000

**PAGES:** 22

**CLASSIFICATION:** Unclassified

Whilst a common European Defence Policy might be the aspiration of some European States, is the next logical step - an autonomous European Defence capability – either desirable and/or feasible?

This paper will cover the background and apparent momentum for greater European Defence integration and discuss its desirability from a British, European, US and NATO perspective



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT .....	iii
TOWARDS A EUROPEAN STRATEGIC DEFENCE CAPABILITY.....	1
CONSENSUS BEFORE CAPABILITY.....	2
WHAT IS ESDI? .....	4
ESDI THE UNITED STATES AND NATO .....	5
GROUNDS FOR OPTIMISM .....	6
RISKING NATO'S FUTURE .....	7
THE WAY FORWARD.....	8
WEU .....	8
ESDI AS A REALITY.....	9
ESDI FORCES.....	10
ESDI AND THE NUCLEAR ISSUE .....	11
CONCLUSION.....	11
ENDNOTES .....	13
BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	15



## TOWARDS A EUROPEAN DEFENCE CAPABILITY

*Why this sudden bewilderment? This confusion? Why are the streets and squares emptying so rapidly, everyone going home, lost in thought? Because night is fallen, and the Barbarians have not come! And some of our men, just in from the border, say there are no Barbarians any longer. Now what is going to happen to us without the Barbarians? They were, those people, after all, a kind of solution.*

—Thucydide's account of the Peloponnesian War

The notion of a unified European Defence Capability is nothing new. The issue was raised after World War II as a means of ridding the Continent of its legacy of internal warfare and nearly succeeded before falling victim to fears of a loss of sovereignty. Forgotten but not completely abandoned, the issue was revived in 1987 after the awakening of the long dormant Western European Union (WEU). During the height of Cold War NATO represented a Trans-Atlantic approach to the security problems of the European Continent and dealt exclusively with the immediacy of the threat from the East. As such, at that time the WEU delegated its core functions to the Alliance in order to avoid undue confusion and duplication. Subsequently, the WEU has served as a forum for the expression of European views on Defence and, more importantly, as a pressure group to keep the United States intimately involved in continental security.

Thus the borne again WEU called for greater cooperation on security and defence noting that "Europe's Integration will never be complete as long as it does not include security and defence". The effort moved slowly at first but gained momentum at the end of the Cold War. More recently events in the Balkans have given the idea even more impetus as Europe realizes that it should take greater responsibility for its own destiny. The conduit for this growing trend has been the European Security and Defence Identity (ESDI). However, whilst the WEU can take credit for resurrecting the issue of ESDI, the organization itself is, again, becoming increasingly sidelined by the prospect of significant European Union (EU) enlargement.

Great Britain has historically been wary of initiatives designed to increase European independence from the United States in strategic and defence policy. This wariness in part stems from traditional concerns regarding the extent to which France might use institutions established for the purpose of promoting an ESDI to secure and further its own national interests. Equally disconcerting for Great Britain has been the prospect that a Franco-German European defence core might sideline the United Kingdom in both importance and influence.<sup>1</sup> In light of this concern, in 1998 Prime Minister Tony Blair called for a reevaluation of the structures through which members of the European Union might collectively define and pursue their security interests. It is this initiative which has lead to an apparent desire to establish a European out-of-area force projection capability, and whilst Great Britain remains determined that defence should not be one of the pillars of the EU, it is clear that the UK Government is

moving towards an organizational and more integrated mind set. Tony Blair summed the situation up as follows: "The imperatives that drove defence spending in America during the super-power stand-off are gone. If Europe wants America to maintain its commitment to Europe, Europe must share more of the burden of defending the West's security interests".<sup>2</sup>

Whilst the recent initiative has raised important questions about Europe's operational capabilities and military structures, as well as its ability to be truly independent from United States support, the question of Europe's will remains paramount. The aspiration is that better military capability will produce more vigorous policy. But, Europe's slowness to respond as an *indigenous group* to the events in the Balkans suggests a lack of strategic consensus, which could prove difficult to surmount. Moreover, political will and military cooperation within Europe and across the Atlantic has traditionally weakened as coalition members address out-of-area security threats, particularly those pertaining to Israel, Iran and Iraq.

Europe's evolving ESDI, and the extent to which the States of Europe possess the resolve to back diplomacy with a credible use of force, is therefore significant not only to European defence, but also with relation to Europe's role within NATO and the broader international system.<sup>3</sup>

#### **CONSENSUS BEFORE CAPABILITY**

Arguably global and regional crises and challenges have placed new demands on the EU's external activities. The Treaty of Amsterdam, which came into force on 01 May 1999, therefore provided a new set of tools to further improve the Union's external posture. Called the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), its five fundamental objectives are:

- To safeguard the common values, fundamental interests, independence and integrity of the Union in conformity with the principles of the United Nations Charter;
- To strengthen the security of the Union in all ways;
- To preserve peace and strengthen international security, in accordance with the United Nations Charter, as well as the principles of the Helsinki Final Act and the objectives of the Paris Charter, including those on external borders;
- To promote international cooperation;
- To develop and consolidate democracy and the rule of law, and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Notwithstanding the apparent blandness of these objectives, CFSP touches at the very heart of the sovereignty of individual nation states. However, thanks to the vision of many European leaders there is a growing recognition that collective influence at the European level is the only way to respond to many of the global challenges of a new Millennium. The principle forum for CFSP is the Council of Ministers (made up principally of EU Foreign Ministers). Unanimity is the general rule in CFSP, but the Amsterdam Treaty allows for a "constructive abstention procedure" by which a member state abstaining in this way will not be obliged to adhere to a particular decision. This "let out" clause is particularly important for EU Countries with residual territorial interests outside the EU, such as Great Britain and France. By departing from a general rule of unanimity other members act by a qualified majority. However, the scope for "qualified majority" decisions is restricted by the fact that no such vote will be taken if a Member State declares that, for important and stated reasons of *national* policy, it intends to oppose the adoption of a decision taken by "qualified majority". In such a situation the Council can request that the matter be referred to the EU Council (Heads of State) for a decision by unanimity.<sup>4</sup>

Having established the key tenets of Foreign Policy at Amsterdam, EU Members addressed security and defence objectives that clearly had to be reformulated in the light of CFSP. The so-called "Petersburg Tasks" of 1992 (i.e. humanitarian and rescue tasks, peacekeeping and crisis management including peacemaking) are explicitly mentioned in the Treaty as aspects of the Union's security policy. Moreover the development of CFSP into a common defense posture, along with the possibility of integrating WEU members into this aspect of the Union has not been ruled out. The Treaty also provides for closer institutional links between the Union and the WEU. Arguably, such a development is essential for a truly pan-European Security Policy to be anything more than a paper tiger. Furthermore, now that the EU is prepared to discuss its security within the framework of CFSP, the relevance of the WEU as a forum for the expression of European views on Defence is being brought increasingly into question. In short, the WEU is being sidelined.

Developments in the European security and defence arenas are moving rapidly with far reaching declarations being announced virtually every six months. But, as Dr Javier Solana, former Secretary General of NATO and now the newly created "High Representative of the EU" states: "A Common Foreign and Security Policy can only be effective if it is backed by effective instruments".<sup>5</sup> Whilst the EU has a wide range of "instruments" at its disposal in the economic sphere, the desire to compliment these with a specific security capability manifested itself in the decisions taken in December 1999 at the EU Summit in Helsinki, Finland - in effect it put some flesh on the bones of CFSP and ESDI.

Three key decisions were taken at Helsinki. Firstly, Europe is now committed to being able to deploy a corps sized force (60,000 troops) within 60 days and to sustaining it for a year. This capability will be coupled with the development of command, control and intelligence systems, as well as the

necessary support infrastructure to sustain such a force in theatre. The mere fact that all EU members have committed to this undertaking is the clearest indication yet that a common policy on many security issues is emerging, although the Helsinki Agreement emphasized that such a force would only be used within the realms of the Petersburg Tasks.

Secondly, EU leaders endorsed the establishment of new politico/military institutions within the Council of Europe to ensure adequate political accountability, and rapid and effective decision making procedures for day-to-day management of operations. It is clear that if this process is to work the decision making process must be as short and flexible as possible to ensure a quick and viable response to a crisis. In addition, it was acknowledged that there was a requirement for a forum to provide the right level of military expertise. The result is that a new EU Military Committee consisting of member states Chiefs of Staffs which will be established in the coming months.

Finally, Helsinki acknowledged that steps needed to be taken to ensure that appropriate measures are put in place for consultation and cooperation with non-EU European States and with NATO. In summary therefore it appears that the political will now exists to take ESDI forward from just being a concept to something more concrete.

#### **WHAT IS ESDI?**

Solana adds that the Helsinki Decisions have been misrepresented in some quarters as the first step in the establishment of a European army, or at least an unnecessary "militarisation" of the EU. He argues that nothing could be further from the truth and that the EU could not have been clearer about its objectives. ESDI is not about collective defence - that is NATO's task, and no attempt is being made to duplicate its work. In fact the EU leaders appear to view the improvements in European military capabilities as an enhancement to the alliance rather than a hindrance. Moreover ESDI does not attempt to undermine the right of member states to retain their own specific security and defence policy. The fact that all Member States, including the neutral countries within the EU, have been able to endorse the Helsinki agreement is arguably clear evidence of this latter point. So much for what ESDI is not.

The EU establishment argues that what the Helsinki Agreement has done is to set in train a process that will enable the EU to assume full responsibility across the whole range of conflict prevention and crisis management tasks. Politically this is increasingly important because over the past 40 years, the EU has become one of the most sophisticated and advanced examples of regional integration in the world. It is now the largest trading bloc in the world and a major actor across the whole range of the global, financial and economic arena. But globalization and growing interdependence suggest that Europe can no longer view the remainder of the world purely in terms of economic objectives. It is clear

that globalization also brings with it a wide range of "transnational challenges" many of which were unheard of a generation ago. The threat of terrorism, international drugs trafficking and environmental challenges are examples of global issues which CFSP recognizes but without ESDI has limited means with which to respond.

Today, the EU can, and does, bring its economic weight to bear in support of its political objectives. It does so in the course of World Trade Organization (WTO) negotiations, in support of economic reconstruction around the world and as a leading player in third world development. Arguably the EU could do more on the economic front but its programs undeniably constitute one of the strengths of the EU. What is required is to compliment and underpin these programs with an effective and credible security capability. Moreover, as the EU enlarges it must be prepared to take more responsibility for regional security, particularly in those areas bordering the Union where there are direct interests at stake. Europe as a collective whole must also be prepared, where necessary, to use all legitimate means to project security and stability beyond its borders. Ideologically, the EU also believes that it must be able to assert the respect of human rights in all areas where peoples lives depend on relief assistance, because they are victims of natural or man made disasters.

In his article Lieutenant Colonel Charles L. Barry, USA (Ret.)<sup>6</sup> asks why Europeans have not moved beyond the ungainly acronym of ESDI in describing their search for military cohesion and further suggests that ESDI is much more fundamental than the rather bland definition described above. Barry argues that the answer is that the intended End State remains uncertain, and although his article was written prior to the Helsinki Agreement, in a politico/military sense this is still the case. Despite apparent unanimity within the EU many nations in Europe still adhere to the concept of independent action even as national militaries become less and less tenable within the Trans-Atlantic framework - a point acknowledged and catered for in CFSP.

### **ESDI, THE UNITED STATES AND NATO**

At the NATO summit of January 1994, the United States joined other members of NATO in endorsing ESDI. There followed a two and a half year struggle to agree on the means to fulfill the summit pledge that NATO assets would be provided to the WEU as necessary to field an ESDI force under the Combined Joint Task Force (CJTF) concept.<sup>7</sup> A definitive endorsement of ESDI was finally reached at the NATO Ministerial Meeting in June 1996 in Berlin. The way was cleared to provide a European Defence capability without the cost of duplicating existing military structures. However, to many, ESDI is only a vague theory on the periphery of serious military activity. A consistent caution heard on both sides of the Atlantic is not to make too much of it too soon, especially when the cost of creating a European force becomes apparent. But, four realities should be considered in assessing its

potential and/or survival. First there are the many obstacles to creating one force from many. The most obvious remains sovereignty despite the steady surrendering of other aspects of national values evident in other institutions of the EU. Second, Helsinki demonstrates that ESDI is here to stay. Third, the original (and now disguised) motives for creating ESDI endure - to counterbalance the United States and Russia in European affairs, to provide an option when American and European interests diverge, and to pursue the logic of bringing integration into the realms of security and defence. Finally, economic strains have left some countries in Europe with no alternative to consolidating declining military establishments and, equally importantly, defence industries. Many European defence industries can no longer operate independently, nor can new systems be fielded by a single nation.

However, ESDI leaves the United States with a dilemma. On the one hand, America has long argued for a more robust European contribution to defence, and the recent Helsinki conclusions provide just that. On the other hand, European only defence schemes raises questions about Europe's commitment to Trans-Atlantic ties, and in an election year within the United States this could be significant.<sup>8</sup>

#### GROUNDS FOR OPTIMISM

The relationship between the EU's security goals and those of NATO have caused apprehension in some quarters. In his speech at the NATO 50th Anniversary Conference in March 1999, Britain's Prime Minister, Tony Blair, was at pains to point out that that ESDI should be viewed as complimenting NATO rather than weakening it. However, he said: "We Europeans should not expect the United States to have to play a part in every disorder in our own back yard. The European Union should be able to take on some security tasks on our own, and we will do better through a common European effort than we can by individual countries acting on their own".<sup>9</sup>

With NATO enlargement in train, the major unfinished business of NATO is to clarify the future US-European balance within the Alliance. The logical extension of Tony Blair's words above suggests an increasingly bi-polar relationship developing, and one that will eventually be more equal in terms of capabilities, responsibilities, burden sharing, and notably influence in European security affairs - as General Sir Charles Guthrie, Chief of the UK Defence Staff puts it: "A Europe that remains allied to the US simply because of its own weakness is of limited value". This new balance will have been achieved together with the inevitable extension of Western security systems ever eastwards. NATO will find it much more difficult to bring in new members and then recast the Trans-Atlantic relationship. At present the Allies find it easier to focus on the East where hopeful states are eager to join the club, Yet as

cooperation partners reach the threshold, NATO, EU (and the WEU) may still be reorganizing and thus be unready for new arrivals. Ideally both tasks should proceed simultaneously.

In essence the central elements of a new security partnership will be a greater role for Europe as a block in Alliance decisions, responsibilities, and burdens, and a continuing senior partner role for the United States wherever its interests are at stake. There is no way of predicting when European Integration might plateau, but following Helsinki, it is clear that it will be the EU rather than the WEU with which NATO will have to come to terms in the longer term. ESDI as it stands must not be seen as a threat to NATO. Notwithstanding Europe's slow coalescence towards greater political union, it will not be distinguishable for some time. Thus it will need a senior partner in the security field, and not one that is merely there to underwrite Armageddon. Even then, there is absolutely no indication that European nation states would be prepared to commit the vast resources required for Europe to stand on its own two feet against every possible security threat. That said, there are those in the United States who want Europe to begin by taking on crisis prevention and by making initial responses to a crisis. The Helsinki declarations set that process in train, but until Europe can acquire capabilities in areas such as intelligence, information warfare and strategic lift, its military ability to conduct any significant operations anywhere other than on its immediate borders will largely be tethered to United States support. Moreover, in turn, Europe needs assurance that the United States remains fully committed to European security and defence through the good offices of NATO.

#### RISKING NATO's FUTURE

The flip side to the above reveals a gloomier picture. Having read the Helsinki Decisions, a senior European diplomat was quoted as saying, "ESDI could end up driving a stake through the heart of the alliance". This is a key point. If all the recent European moves - from the announcement some years ago of a "Franco-German" corps, to the 1998 St Malo declaration of an Anglo-French "Eurocorps", and now ESDI were nothing more than European efforts to increase their contribution to NATO, then the United States would be wise to agree. However, many would argue that a separate European defence "identity" whether as a "pillar" within NATO or outside the Alliance will change NATO forever. This is an inherent problem of alliance cohesion and management, and "not something that can be papered over with the inevitable EU verbiage about architecture"<sup>10</sup> The danger is that if Europe can actually deliver a separate, unified military capability without recourse to the United States, it will effectively reduce the rationale for NATO as we know it and change fundamentally the relationship between the United States and Europe. Exponents of this theory go so far as to quote Javier Solana when he stated that he was aiming for "a new equilibrium between the United States, Canada and Europe". Additionally, this is precisely what President Chirac of France seeks, to end both American "dominance" of the Alliance, and European dependence on United States capabilities and technology. Europeans are quick to remind

Americans that positions such as these should not be regarded seriously. However, they play into the hands of a growing group in America who feel that the United States has contributed too much to European security and for too long.

## THE WAY FORWARD

Thus there are several sensitivities within the NATO/ESDI debate which must be accounted for if NATO and ESDI are to develop in harmony. First all non-EU allies (including the United States) need to be convinced that the further development of ESDI will genuinely reinforce NATO and not act as a distraction and/or duplication of effort within NATO. Secondly specific European non-EU allies who are by now comfortable with the arrangements developed after the Berlin Summit for NATO support for WEU led operations, need to be convinced that the shift of focus from WEU to EU operations following the Franco-British initiative at St Malo, will fully respect their concerns. Thirdly, within EU allies there are some who would have preferred to place emphasis on the development of European security amongst Europeans rather than involve the remainder of NATO. Notwithstanding the above, the message that came from the 1999 NATO Summit in Washington was the right one; it welcomed the development of European defence; gave a commitment to strengthening the arrangements by which NATO would support European operations and strongly endorsed the importance of a NATO-based defence.

But, NATO will have to adapt to changing trends, and indeed could be strengthened by them. For example, in principle, when a small-scale crisis develops, a European led diplomatic and military initiative might end the predicament before it escalates either regionally or globally. Military forces could come from either ESDI or NATO lead CJTF formations. In either case the scenario envisages Europe assuming greater regional responsibility, with an engaged and committed United States in a close supporting role. However, when Article 5 of the NATO Treaty is invoked - or a fast moving crisis takes on global proportions - the United States would logically be the lead partner. Thus NATO continues to enjoy close harmony with its European Partners and ESDI is seen as an evolutionary enhancement that ensures NATO's future.

## WEU

Whilst the Helsinki Declarations of late 1999 weakened (in all probability deliberately) the WEU's position, until, as several commentators believe it will, it dovetails within the EU, it remains relevant today to "serve as the lubricant in the relationship between NATO and the EU so long as membership of those institutions differ". Much of the developmental work of ESDI has come out of lessons learned within the WEU. But contrary to popular belief the WEU is not merely the "military arm" of the EU, and therefore deserves separate mention as an avenue of approach for European defence integration. Today as an

international defence and security organization the WEU brings together around the same table 21 nations that are also members of the EU and/or NATO and seven Central European countries.<sup>11</sup> Like the tenets of ESDI, the WEU's practical role is to enable Europeans to undertake the politico-military management of crises in which North American members of NATO might not wish to become directly involved. Indeed the WEU will probably act following a political decision by the EU and may also call upon NATO assets and capabilities.

In the Nineties the WEU affirmed its role was imbedded in the Petersburg Tasks and also demonstrated its ability to act on several occasions. Forces deployed in the Adriatic to monitor the embargo during the early months of the Bosnia crisis and direct assistance given to Bulgaria, Hungary and Romania following severe floods along the Danube are but two examples. Whilst the WEU has no military command structure, units or formations have been earmarked by individual states that may be called upon in a crisis. In addition, multinational formations such as EUROCORPS and the UK/Netherlands Amphibious Force are potentially deployable under the WEU banner. The WEU also has an increasingly important emerging role in promoting defence procurement cooperation amongst its members so that a stronger European defence industrial base can stand along side that of the United States. The Tiger Attack Helicopter, Future Large Aircraft, Eurofighter, Euromissile (TRIGAT) and the Horizon Frigate are prime examples.

Operationally, the WEU is likely to be only capable for some time of carrying out military operations of modest size and intensity. However, in the short term and until ESDI develops, the hybrid nature of the organization and its inherent flexibility could work to Europe's advantage. Due to its position as the interface between NATO and the EU the WEU can expand according to the demands of a given situation. For example, it is now clear that contingency planning was considerably advanced for a European led peace enforcement operation in Kosovo had the United States not deployed. Undeniably the WEU will not deal with the breadth of security issues handled by NATO, but it will be an excellent test bed for ESDI and could be called upon to play an increasing role in regional security.

#### **ESDI AS A REALITY**

Helsinki makes clear that the EU has as its objective the capacity to conduct EU-led military operations in response to international crises, but only where NATO as a whole is not engaged. Developing the capacity to achieve this will involve increasing cooperation between Member States on very practical issues such as the inter-operability of their respective armed forces. As an aside, this in itself could be an advantage to NATO. Indeed the EU will have to become an "intelligent customer" of NATO. When NATO itself is not engaged, but the EU launches a military operation, it will, in the early years at least, have to have recourse to NATO assets. This means that full transparency between the EU and NATO will have to be developed. The EU will also have to examine the arrangements whereby

consultation and contribution from non-EU members is a possibility. This obviously concerns mainly the non-EU members of NATO who must all have a right to participate if the EU uses NATO assigned assets. Similar arrangements will have to be made with the WEU. Speaking as the newly appointed Secretary General of the EU ESDI process, Javier Solana said recently: "....The expertise and specialized resources of the WEU have to be put fully at the disposal of the EU. My own doubled hatted appointment as Secretary General of the WEU should assist this process.....I can at least say that cooperation between the current Secretary Generals of the EU and WEU is beyond reproach!" ESDI also needs the right assets to make a reality of military capability, for example in areas such as strategic lift, intelligence gathering and wider command and control. These issues need to be planned and discussed at a European rather than national level and will lead to a requirement to "reform our armed forces so that they fit together better and are tailored to the next conflict and not the last war".<sup>12</sup>

It is widely believed that military challenges faced by Europe will increasingly be about crisis prevention, peace keeping and peace-making; humanitarian operations rather than the collective defence of territory.<sup>13</sup> These will be amply covered under ESDI and the Petersburg tasks. But what if the unthinkable happens and Europe once again finds itself fighting for survival? The chances of such a scenario developing are so slight that to enhance Europe's defence capability beyond that envisaged in ESDI would seem pointless so long as NATO remains a common foundation for Europe's territorial defence. That Europe would be technologically capable of doing so is obvious, but again the cost would be prohibitive, the time exhaustive and the consensus required for ultimate success almost impossible to achieve. The key here is the political dimension. No country can accept the use of its armed forces without its full consent. Any autonomous European capability must therefore, for the time being, be complimentary to NATO.

#### ESDI FORCES

The key to ESDI will be the multinational forces assigned to it. Presumably Eurocorps (France, Germany, Belgium, Luxembourg, Spain, and the United Kingdom), European Force (EUROFOR) (France, Italy, Portugal, Spain) and European Maritime Force (EUROMARFOR) (France, Italy, Portugal, Spain) are contenders. Except for the ACE Rapid Reaction Corps which could be chopped from NATO, no other formation has representation from more than five European countries. Several bilateral defence arrangements exist within Europe but there tend to be planning and coordination agreements to allow for combined training. Eurocorps, EUROFOR and EUROMARFOR are salient because they were formed outside the auspices of NATO, and although available to the Alliance their priority is to the WEU. Moreover, they are open to other nations to join at relative short notice. In the final analysis the forces which Europe actually identifies and ultimately deploys will be the measure of its collective defence.

## **ESDI AND THE NUCLEAR ISSUE**

Forging a common European nuclear capability will be no easy task, but the prospect, thanks to Helsinki, is more real than it was five years ago. Europe may not be faced with the stark choice posed by the French paper Livre Blanc: "With nuclear weapons, European defence autonomy is a possibility, without them it is out of the question"<sup>14</sup>. But nuclear weapons are clearly on the agenda where only a few years ago such a proposition would have been unthinkable. The problems to a common approach are legion. However, as long as ESDI is a reality the issue will not go away.

## **CONCLUSION**

One of the most striking themes to emerge from this paper is the fact that many European states have apparently increased their enthusiasm for European defence cooperation, and the sheer speed with which this change has come about. Even Britain, which has long resisted such moves, has called for an increase in overall capability. Perhaps the reason for this can be viewed against a background of a proliferation of more limited and regional threats. In an increasingly interdependent world, Europe has realized that she cannot ignore these crises and cannot ignore their fall-out in terms of human suffering, and of regional instability.<sup>15</sup> Europe (more specifically the EU), can be a real instrument of security when there are shared interests, but notwithstanding the progress made with CFSP, the ability for Europe to act might yet be frustrated by individual states who feel unable to compromise.<sup>16</sup>

NATO is the only serious military organization to underpin European security today and is likely to remain so for the foreseeable future. On practical matters NATO has been, and remains indispensable. Its first actual wartime deployments came during the Gulf War, and its first shots in anger within Europe came in support of the UN in Bosnia and latterly Kosovo. Politically and militarily, NATO remains dependant on the United States and no substantial military operation is possible without her support and certainly not in the face of her opposition. The WEU, though arguably waning in importance, remains an expedient institution with varying and normally transient functions. Although NATO remains the only proper alliance with a serious basis for proper collective defence, absent the United States and the WEU could be turned into a serious alliance. This would only happen if the US stepped away from her European commitments.

Whilst Helsinki has afforded ESDI added momentum and the precise shape of European defence has yet to be defined in detail, we are entering a new era of European defence cooperation and capability which if handled correctly at the political level will enhance rather than harm NATO. However, in conclusion, the British historian, Sir John Keegan, sounds a clear note of caution: "Europe is still far from establishing its military independence from the United States. Until it can do so it should carefully

consider whether it is desirable to make military gestures that do nothing to alarm the enemies of European security - the Balkan Warlords and the resurgent Russian militarists - but many unnecessarily offend Europe's Trans-Atlantic protectors. In the world of Defence, the United States continues to sustain the burden it took up in 1941, obliged to enter the Second World War by Japanese aggression, it decided to make its main military effort in Europe".<sup>17</sup>

WORD COUNT = 5441

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> Lt Col CL Barry USA (Ret.) – "Creating a European Security and Defence Identity" – JFQ Spring 1997: 62-69.

<sup>2</sup> Euro Forum - Blair's Defence Initiative December 15, 1998.

<sup>3</sup> Tony Blair, UK Prime Minister, "Europe's Defence Capability" New York Times, 15 December 1999.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Europa - The European Commission Papers - CFSP - Common Foreign and Security Policy.

<sup>6</sup> WEU Documents - Speech by Dr Javier Solana 17 December 1999.

<sup>7</sup> Lt Col CL Barry USA (Ret.) – "Creating a European Security and Defence Identity" – JFQ Spring 1997: 62-69.

<sup>8</sup> Richard Hatfield, "NATO's New Strategic Concept", 27 September 1999, RUSI Online available from: [www.rusi.org](http://www.rusi.org); Internet; accessed 25 January 2000.

<sup>9</sup> John Bolton, "Risking NATO's Future?", Washington Post, 15 December 1999; accessed from Earlybird 15 December 1999.

<sup>10</sup> FCO Papers - Speech by Prime Minister Tony Blair, NATO 50th Anniversary Conference - London March 1999, available from [www.fco.gov.uk](http://www.fco.gov.uk); Internet; accessed 27 January 2000.

<sup>11</sup> John Bolton, Washington Times, 15 December 1999.

<sup>12</sup> G Wyn Rees The Western European Union at the Crossroads - 1998 Introduction.

<sup>13</sup> Right Honourable George Robertson MP - UK Secretary of State of Defence – 1999. Source: see note 7.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Livre Blanc, 1994. Details unknown.

<sup>16</sup> Javier Solana, "The integration Project of the next Decade", 17 December 1999. Available from [www.weu.int/speeches](http://www.weu.int/speeches); Internet; accessed 02 February 2000.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Sir John Keegan, "The US is not amused by our Redundant Military Gestures" London Daily Telegraph, December 6, 1999



## BIBLIOGRAPHY

G Wyn Rees, The Western European Union at the Crossroads, 1998.

Edward Foster & Gordon Wilson, CJTF – A Lifeline for a European Defence Policy?, (RUSI Whitehall Paper Series 1997).

Jolyon Howorth & Anand Menon, The European Union and National Defence Policy, (Rutledge 1997).

Washington Quarterly, Military Force in an Age of National Cowardice, Autumn 1998, Copyright 1998.

British Foreign and Commonwealth Office Briefing Paper, The Western European Union, Autumn 1993

Brookings Review, Europe, Summer 1999 Issue.